



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

BY FRANCES A. KELLOR,

Vice-Chairman, Committee for Immigrants in America, New York.

We knew in the winter of 1914 *before the war* that one out of every eight wage-earners in some of our cities had become unemployed; we know in 1915 that one out of every five wage-earners can become unemployed when a great international crisis disturbs our foreign markets. These are not paupers, vagrants and unemployables. They are men and women willing and able to work, idle through no fault of their own.

How much more do we need to know to do something more fundamental than start bread lines, temporary work shops, or asking full time men to work half time or to receive less pay? How much longer will we rely upon charitable societies and relief funds collected by personal appeals, fetes, dinners, balls and other entertainments to feed and clothe the unemployed? Is it not ironical that we depend so largely upon *entertainments* to keep people from freezing and starving to death? The proceeds of a circus are today paying the wages of helpless women in New York City, and this is typical of the country.

A national administration reluctant to face a situation which may turn out to have political significance answers the appeals of American citizens by throttling the bills providing relief, by ordering a census to interpret the suffering in terms of statistical tables, and by indirectly establishing federal employment bureaus, after the crisis was over.

The states have done little better. They, too, are in the grip of a reaction which sees political danger in recognizing the evil, and political success in doing nothing about it.

We should be chiefly concerned not with our meager accomplishments but with what we shall do next year. Even with a sudden increase in prosperity, unemployment is a continuing problem, and I venture to make some suggestions that we can think about putting into a real program of action before the relief demands absorb our energies again.

1. Separate politics and unemployment in action as well as in theory. Deal with unemployment as an industrial problem fearlessly, regardless of its effect upon political fortunes. Nationally we did not do this in either 1913 or 1914.

2. Organize the labor market by establishing government bureaus and regulating private agencies. This is only a small part of the work. Employers will use them only when convinced of their efficiency and impartiality. Their coöperation is vital. How vital, the Detroit Chamber of Commerce illustrated in its employment bureau conducted this winter. In the one month for which the complete record is available, it placed 17 per cent of its applicants when other bureaus were averaging less than 5 per cent, and it showed that the number *retained in jobs on the strength of its appeal* equalled the number of applicants for the month, over 15,000.

3. Apportion the field of effort—do not have the government doing the work of philanthropy, or philanthropy running the business of government, and do not have either of them take up the load belonging to industry. The charities know their task and have resources for dealing with the unemployable. Keep the worker in the job line and out of the bread line as long as it can be done.

4. Get industry to consider unemployment as a risk of business to be prevented or remedied at the earliest possible minute. Let each business man ascertain for himself what is the actual cost of changing employees, maintenance of reserve labor supply, constant employment of green men, irregularity of output, etc. Do you know what one investigator found who had enough curiosity to inquire?

A typical number of industries studied in 1912 showed 38,668 employees at the beginning and 46,796 at the end of the year, an increase of 8,128 people, but during the year 44,365 people were engaged indicating that 36,237 had dropped out of employment. Allowing 21 per cent for death, illness, withdrawals and fluctuations, or 13,022 and the 8,128 increase—the reserve supply numbered 22,225, or 59 per cent of the number employed at the beginning. By interviewing a number of industrial managers the investigator found that the cost of training a new employee averaged about \$35, involving an economic loss of \$774,139 in these changes.

It is time business and the government got together. Why not plan work together—business to lessen seasonal periods of employ-

ment, irregularity of employment, reduction in annual changes of men and in reserve supply; government to carry on its public works, road building, reclamation work, rivers and harbors improvements in dull seasons. Let the unemployed be heard—not in parades, not in I. W. W. speeches, not in riots, not in bread lines, not in hearings wherein the basis of selection of witnesses is unknown and politics play a part; but let them be heard in an honest, fearless statement of conditions, neither better nor worse than they are, and then let us courageously meet the conclusions with remedies.

Unemployment cannot be solved along one main line. There are subsidiary lines which will require consideration. I have time to consider but one of these—immigration.

Can we solve it by restricting immigration or do we need something less negative and more constructive? We know as yet practically nothing of the causes of unemployment in this country when they are not created by war, or seasonal occupations, or casual labor, which, great as they are, do not constitute the most serious elements in the unemployment problem today.

We have the beginnings of a national domestic immigration policy admirably begun by the Department of Labor at Washington. A series of federal employment exchanges has been established, utilizing machinery which, however, may be needed at any time for immigration, and Secretary Wilson has already announced the necessity for the regulation of private employment agencies that conduct an interstate business and has called a national conference to consider unemployment. There is the Bureau of Naturalization and the admirable work begun by Commissioner Claxton for the education of the alien to meet these requirements, thereby eliminating unemployment due to legal bars. There is the new Ellis Island and the development of educational work and information which Commissioner Howe has much at heart, which will better distribute the alien.

But the causes of unemployment go far afield and are difficult to eliminate. There remains to be done, the safeguarding of aliens' savings through private banks and steamship ticket agencies, by interstate regulations; of investment in land and in colonization projects, by the registry of all such lands in the Department of Agriculture and the investigation of colonization projects and a survey of distribution methods and analysis of their failure. There

remains the transference of labor discriminations from petty state laws and obscure ordinances to the immigration law dealing with admission and in accordance with our treaty obligations; there remains the establishment of a minimum standard of living conditions below which no employer should be willing to have his employees live; there is the padrone to be abolished; there remain to be established adequate educational facilities, and equality before the law in such matters as interpreter service and benefits under social insurance laws. These and many other aspects of the alien's life in America have a vital relation to his unemployment.

When we shall have established such a policy it is contended it will increase immigration. No man can produce the evidence which will prove or disprove this contention. It lies in the realm of opinion. Not so long ago the minimum wage was recommended by no less an authority than Paul Kellogg as a means of restriction. It is as reasonable to believe that the conservation of men will steady the supply and lessen the necessity for reserve and decrease the number of public charges as that it will displace American workmen who can find no other foothold. Some employers have found that the teaching of English lessens the percentage of accidents and not only saves damages, but eliminates the cost of breaking in new men. One reason our control of our immigration supply is so unintelligent is that we know so little of what goes on in our own country with reference to it.

This war should carry one lesson home. There are in this country thousands of immigrant colonies and communities where little or no English is spoken, where American ideals of justice, freedom of women, right of children to an education and a childhood, and democratic institutions are unknown. There are in this country thousands of foreign born aliens and some citizens whose first allegiance is not to America. There are other thousands of foreign language newspapers (several hundred of which were swung into public print the other day against exportation of ammunition) about whose preaching and teaching America knows little. It may be for or against America; we as a nation do not know—and the lesson is this:

We do know that we should be one nation and one people, we who dwell together in this land of peace and prosperity, and there is no greater concern of this country today than to develop a wise

policy of Americanization which shall mean both unity and harmony. It is the policy of "let the immigrant alone" which makes him willing to listen to the I. W. W. and makes him a menace in time of war and a blight in time of peace. It is both the privilege and the opportunity of the American and his government with all the odds now in his favor to realize the ideal of one nation and one people, and when we do, we shall solve a little thing like unemployment as easily as we have bridged distance by means of electricity and mastered production by means of machinery. The chief reason we have the problem today is because men whose gift it is to master space and nature's resources have not applied themselves to the task in the "do or die" spirit of American enterprise.

Where shall the responsibility for a program of scientific inquiry into the causes of unemployment and their remedy center? Not in the government with a 1916 campaign imminent; not in charitable organizations, which have work enough of their own to do with unemployables; not in any legislative association, for it is a mistake to approach this problem with the idea that it can be solved by laws; not by any new organization, which it will cost money to establish—may some wise Providence save us from another organization to deal with this subject.

Why not a special committee of the national Chamber of Commerce which commands funds and widespread organization with some labor men and women serving on it, to whose report organized business which holds the key to the situation will listen?

I have before me the record of how some hundreds of industries prevented unemployment in 1914. All industrial America could use this information to advantage and is eager for it. We shall have no solution until business takes up the task, and it is worthy of the best efforts of its leaders.